

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

THE BALTIMORE STORY

The Impact of Clearance Rates on Inner-City Life of Baltimore

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**Appendix: History of Baltimore and Crime (Beginning-2014)**

Baltimore was established in 1729. It was created as a port for shipping tobacco and grain. Eventually, waterways were built for flour milling. During the time of the American Revolution, Baltimore was a buzzing seaport and shipbuilding center. The Continental Congress met in Baltimore when it was feared that the British would attack the national capital after attacking Philadelphia. In 1797, the Navy launched their first ship, the Constellation. The last all-sail warship that was built in 1854, with the same name, is being kept in the city's harbor today. In the War of 1812, the British tried to capture Baltimore unsuccessfully. Fort McHenry's defense was a key role, and it became the inspiration for "The Star-Spangled Banner" poem, by Francis Scott Key. (Britannica) In 1827, the eastern terminus for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, the nation's first railroad, was built in the city. It was called Mount Clare Station. Today, the station is now the home of the railroad museum. During the American Civil War, which was in 1861-1865, many of Baltimore's citizens had Southern ideals, despite Maryland not seceding from the Union. Also, during the war, Union troops stayed in Baltimore.

In 1904, Baltimore a small fire that occurred in the business district grew into an uncontrollable flame that ended up engulfing a huge portion of the city that evening. (History 2010) This fire was known as The Great Baltimore Fire. The fire lasted 31 hours and had destroyed over 1,500 buildings, while about 1,000 other buildings were severely damaged. The property loss was estimated at \$100 million. Official reports stated that no one had died, however, other reports stated that one person was killed in the fire.

#### *Creation of the FBI Office*

In 1914, the FBI had established a field division office in Baltimore. It was led by Special Agent in Charge John Gregurevich. This division office handled more than just crime in Baltimore, they handled interstate crime to national security matters. In the beginning of WWII, the division handled national security concerns as its priority. By 1941, 30 agents were involved in more than 2,500 investigations at once. (FBI)

#### *Case of John Elgin Johnson*

One achievement in the FBI office was in 1953, when the office had to deal with the case of John Elgin Johnson. Johnson had a history of bank robberies and served a ton of time in prison because of these crimes. Almost three months after being released, new information was received by the LA Sheriff's Office that a man in a supermarket identified himself as being a part of the police department and was asking about information about the market, like where the funds are stored, the amount of funds, and when the fund would be taken to the bank. The manager of the market noted that the "police officer" left in a red convertible. Johnson was later identified as being the man that said he was with the police department. About two weeks after Johnson was identified, the Huntington Park Police Department investigated the finding of a body in a local residence. It was soon identified that Johnson was the last person seen with the victim. In

September of 1953, a reporter from Los Angeles, Sidney Hughes, received a phone call from Baltimore, Maryland. The person who was calling was Johnson. Johnson was calling to find out where he was wanted because he wanted to start a business in Los Angeles. Hughes has told Johnson to call back at a specific time so that they could discuss more. Once the time for the second phone call arrived, Hughes continued to talk to Johnson for about an hour until the FBI office in Baltimore could get a location on Johnson. Finally, the FBI office was able to get a location on Johnson. He was located in Towne Theatre, which was a motion picture house in the heart of Baltimore. (FBI) Four agents, one of them being Special Agent J. Brady Murphy, had figured out the room where Johnson was and divided into two groups and went through the only two accessible points of entry. Once the agents entered the room, there was a man in a telephone booth, that man was Johnson. Johnson then fired two shots that hit Murphy and his partner. All the agents opened fire into the booth, sending 15 shots into the booth. Johnson was pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital while Murphy and his partner were rushed to the hospital to be treated for their injuries. Murphy's partner survived, but unfortunately, Murphy succumbed to his injuries and died at the hospital.

#### *Case of Bobby Wilcoxson and Albert Nussbaum*

Another achievement from the office was the arrest of a Ten Most Wanted fugitive Bobby Wilcoxson. In the early 1960s, Bobby Wilcoxson and his partner in crime, Albert Nussbaum, were known as bank robbers. However, their rap sheets would expand further, even including murder and setting off bombs. The pair first met in prison. When they were both released, they robbed their first bank together in 1960. In the next year, Nussbaum made his own bombs and planned to set them off as a distraction while the pair goes to rob another bank in Washington, DC. Fortunately, two of the bombs going off, the third one failed and the FBI office

was able to get the fingerprints of Nussbaum. Despite the third bomb failing to go off, the duo was able to rob the bank. In December of 1961, the pair robbed their fifth bank, the robbery that landed them on the Top Ten fugitives list. (FBI) In order to rob this fifth bank, Nussbaum and Wilcoxson needed to get rid of a bank guard. They brought on a third member, Peter Curry, but this plan would eventually go awry. During the robbery, Wilcoxson was able to shoot and kill the guard, but a customer at the bank was able to alert police. Wilcoxson got into a shoutout with another officer who was wounded but survived. The trio managed to escape, but Curry was caught within 2 months of the robbery. The duo was now on the run and had become national fugitives. This did not stop them from committing robberies. While on the run, the duo, along with Wilcoxson's girlfriend, managed to carry out three more robberies. Wilcoxson and Nussbaum ended up having a falling out and split up. Nussbaum was then located when he reached out to his estranged wife. The mother of the estranged wife notified the FBI office, and they were able to capture Nussbaum after a car chase in November 1962. Almost a week later, Wilcoxson was caught with his girlfriend and their young child. They both ended up pleading guilty and got sentenced to life in prison.

### *2012 St. Patrick's Day Attack*

On March 18, 2012, a tourist was walking home in Downtown Baltimore after partying all night celebrating St. Patrick's Day. While on the walk, they were attacked by a group of people. The tourist was beaten, robbed, and stripped naked. The crime became viral because a video that captured the attack was uploaded online. The victim didn't know what had happened until a family member found the video online and contacted them. According to the video, bystanders laughed and pointed at the tourist while they were getting beaten and robbed. The culprits were eventually arrested and charged.

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